

**SYDNEY  
FESTIVAL**  
6-28 JAN 2018

**AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA  
AND ART GALLERY OF NSW | AUSTRALIA  
WORLD PREMIERE**

# REMBRANDT LIVE

Photo: Pedro Gady

REMBRANDT 1639-1682  
Master of Light  
1639-1682

# REMBRANDT LIVE

AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA AND ART GALLERY OF NSW | AUSTRALIA

WORLD PREMIERE

ART GALLERY OF NSW  
6–23 JANUARY  
60 MINS

18 & 19 JANUARY  
BAROQUE BANQUET & PERFORMANCE (SPECIAL EVENT)  
4 HRS

**Exhibition Curator** Peter Raissis (AGNSW)  
& Pieter Roelofs (Rijksmuseum)

**Music Curator** Paul Dyer

**Director** John Bell

**Choreographer** Kelley Abbey

**Costume Stylist** Tony Assness

**Soundscape** Stephen Francis

**Lighting** Kane Hancock

## Musicians

Matt Greco (baroque violin)

Melissa Farrow (baroque flute, recorder)

Tommie Andersson (theorbo/baroque guitar, lute)

Laura Vaughan (viola da gamba)

Joanna Tondys (chamber organ, harpsichord)

Josie Ryan (soprano)

Richard Butler (tenor)

**Dancers** Talia Fowler, Neale Whittaker, Stephen Tannos

**Orchestral Operations Manager** Ashley Giles

**Exhibition Researcher** Josephine Touma

**Stage Manager** Shannon O'Hara

**Producer** Noel Staunton (ABO)

**Executive Producer** Ashlie Hunter (AGNSW)

## AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

**Artistic Director** Paul Dyer

**Managing Director** Bruce Applebaum

## ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

**Director** Michael Brand

**Deputy Director & Director of Collections** Maud Page

## REMBRANDT AND THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum

*Rembrandt and the Dutch golden age* presents a richly unfolding panorama of Dutch society during an era of unparalleled wealth, power and cultural confidence. In the Dutch golden age, the art of painting flourished like never before. Artists sensitively observed the beauty of the visible world, transforming it, with great skill, into vivid and compelling paintings. Their subjects ranged from intense portraits and dramatic seascapes to tranquil scenes of domestic life and careful studies of fruit and flowers.

Drawn from the Rijksmuseum, the renowned national collection of the Netherlands, this exhibition includes a rare painting by Johannes Vermeer and a room dedicated to one of the greatest minds in the history of art, Rembrandt van Rijn.

## REPERTOIRE

The pieces appear not in performance order:

Jacob van Eyck (arr. Jan Devlieger) – Boffons

Anonymous/Constantijn Huygens – Song *Hoe is 't beloven van ons vergaren*

Henry du Mont – Allemanda gravis

Jacob van Eyck – Doen Daphne d'over schooner Maeght

Anonymous – Song *Ick seg adieu*

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck – Puer nobis nascitur

Johannes Schenk – Ciacone Op. 2 No. 1

Willem de Fesch – Trio sonata in g minor, Op. 7 No. 4

Constantijn Huygens – Air *Te voila donc, bel oeil*

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck – Allemand

Thomas Baltzar – Prelude in G major

David Petersen – Sonata for violin No. 5 from *Speelstukken*

Anonymous – Song *Merck toch hoe sterck*

Anonymous/Constantijn Huygens – Song *Hoe is 't beloven van ons vergaren*: Huygens wrote the song for his wife Susanna, expressing his love and longing to see her. He chose to address her in this poem as "Sterre" (Star).

Anonymous – Song *Ick seg adieu*: is a secular farewell song of two lovers, promising their hearts belong to each other forever. The song is found in the *Antwerp Song Book* (1544).

Constantijn Huygens – Air *Te voila donc, bel oeil*: written in 1619 for the departure of the Princess of Chimay from the Hague. In his song, Huygens elaborates the paradox of joy at the Princess's recovery and sorrow at her departure.

Anonymous – Song *Merck toch hoe sterck*: the story of Bergen op Zoom defying the Spanish, who failed to stranglehold the fortified city successfully.

## JOHN BELL – DIRECTOR

The pictures in this exhibition display a widely disparate range of subjects – domestic and pastoral scenes, still lifes, portraits of worthy burghers, historical, biblical and naval panoramas.

In devising *Rembrandt Live* I could see no point in trying to create a homogenous show with the performers relating to or commenting on the individual paintings... Rather, I'd like to complement the exhibition by taking you on a stroll through the galleries with a bunch of buskers and street performers who will give you a flavour of the Age in which the works were created.

Against an intermittent soundscape of street noises, our musicians will give authentic performances of music from the period. But to avoid this becoming a dry academic exercise, I have asked Kelley Abbey and her dancers to give just a nod to the Baroque and then feel free to respond to the music with their own joyous physicality.

Much of the Dutch art of this period reflects a Protestant austerity, but as we can see in some of the sumptuous still lifes and riotous domestic scenes, the human spirit, in all its ribald jollity, will keep breaking through.

## PAUL DYER – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

The Netherlands, its art and its music are very dear to my heart. As a young musician with a passion for early music, I chose to study at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, and it was there that I connected with the enormous artistic output of this small country.

Often, for days at a time I was a visitor to both the stunning Rijksmuseum and its smaller counterpart in Den Haag, the Mauritshuis, where I would sit in front of a Rembrandt or Vermeer soaking up inspiration from these incredible Dutch artists. They never failed to impress in their sheer range of works on display: amusing and theatrical, chilling and mysterious, exquisite and inspiring. It is this range of sentiments that I have sought to capture in the music that this ensemble, drawn from the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, will perform in *Rembrandt Live*.

This selection of music, which is an assortment of bite-sized works from the Netherlands, gives a journey through the country's language, history and culture. It includes a joyous love song, a soulful sonata, and a triumphant folk song which rejoices in the Dutch victory over the Spanish occupancy of the Low Countries.

The program also includes a range of Renaissance and Baroque works by little-known composers who were close contemporaries of Rembrandt. The result is, I hope you will agree, a fitting musical accompaniment to these stunning works that we are so lucky to have visiting us.

## PETER RAISSIS – CURATOR

If I had to pick a favourite artwork out of the 78 prestigious loans from Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum currently on display in *Rembrandt and the Dutch golden age*, it would be Rembrandt's *Self portrait as the apostle Paul*.

I first saw the painting on a Sunday afternoon more than a quarter of a century ago in a small town on the mid-north coast of NSW. It was during the school holidays while watching an ABC re-run of Kenneth Clark's magisterial TV series, *Civilization*.

Even in grainy, televisual reproduction, I was transfixed as much by Rembrandt's expressive, heavy-handed use of paint as by the psychological dimension of the portrait, which seemed to penetrate the artist's very heart and soul.

Painted in 1661 when Rembrandt was 55, it represents one of the most recognisable faces in the history of art – a face perhaps prematurely aged by the loss of the artist's three children, his wife, his art collection, his house. With furrowed brow and raised eyebrows, Rembrandt peers out at us across the centuries, pensively, quizzically, meaningfully. His whole life is written in his face.

While Rembrandt's name is synonymous with the Dutch golden age, there were many exceptionally talented painters in 17th-Century Holland. You will encounter them in all their diversity in the exhibition: Hals' portraits of sturdy burghers, Vermeer's intimate domestic scenes, Steen's unruly households, Ruisdael's billowing cloudscapes, De Heem's colourful flower pieces.

But Rembrandt's art includes a range of experience and imagination greater than that of any other artist and any individual viewer. And when your eyes meet Rembrandt's eyes in the great self portrait of 1661 you might also realise, as I did recently, that he knows you better than you know yourself.

It will be an exciting experience to witness the Brandenburg and John Bell bringing music and performance to the rich visual world of Dutch art that we have created in the exhibition.

## THANK YOU

This performance is made possible by the generous support of: Carole Lamerton, Robyn Martin-Weber, Margaret Olley Art Trust, Peter Weiss AO and Ray Wilson OAM.

Special thanks to Sydney Theatre Company Costume Department and Consort 8.

*Rembrandt Live is a non-linear work performed within the exhibition. Multiple performances take place simultaneously – so feel free to move back and forth through the rooms.*



★★★★★

“THIS PRODUCTION IS A WORK OF GENIUS”

DAILY REVIEW

QUEENSLAND THEATRE AND DEAD PUPPET SOCIETY | AUSTRALIA

# THE WIDER EARTH

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE  
17-27 JANUARY

The Sydney Morning Herald



FUEL, NATIONAL THEATRE AND WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE | UK

# BARBER SHOP

# CHRONICLES

★★★★★

“JOYOUS. BRILLIANTLY ACTED. LIFE-AFFIRMING. GO”  
THE INDEPENDENT

SEYMOUR CENTRE  
18-28 JANUARY



The Sydney Morning Herald  
INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS.